

Consequences of not having the procedure - If left untreated the ingrowing toenail can become infected and turn into an abscess. It can also infect the underlying bone and lead to a bone infection.

How long does it take to recover?

Most patients find that it only takes a few days to recover fully after the toenail surgery. Avoid swimming, high impact sports and inappropriate footwear

Will the ingrowing toenail come back?

In most patients the ingrowing toenail does not come back. The best way to ensure this does not happen is to ensure the toenail is being cut correctly. Cut the toenail straight across with scissors or nail clippers and do not tear the toenail off.

What to do if you have a problem?

If you have any problems contact the ward you were discharged from or contact your GP for advice.

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital
Marshall's Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA
Telephone: 01744 26633

Southport Hospital
Town Lane, Kew,
Southport, Merseyside,
PR8 6PN
Telephone: 01704 547 471

Ormskirk Hospital
Dicconson Way, Wigan Road,
Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2AZ
Telephone: 01695 577 111

Ingrowing Toenails

Patient information leaflet

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتيسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

What is an ingrowing toenail?

An ingrowing toenail is when the edge of the toenail is painful, swollen, red or hot to touch. It is likely that the toenail is growing into the flesh on the edge of the nailbed, causing some inflammation.

The most common cause of an ingrowing toenail is not cutting the toenail properly and leaving a sharp spike of toenail at the edge. As the toenail grows this spike pushed into the flesh like a hook and causes pain and inflammation.

Nature of the procedure

There are different operations that are used depending on the severity of the problem. The operation usually requires a general anaesthetic.

First time ingrowing toenail - Just the edge of the nail is trimmed and sometimes a strong antiseptic solution is put onto the wound to disinfect it.

Badly infected ingrowing toenail - The whole nail is removed to allow the infection out and to provide pain relief. The toenail will re-grow normally over the following months.

Recurrent problems - Sometimes it is advised to have the toenail and its growing point removed so that the nail never re-grows. This is known as a Zadek's procedure.

Benefits of the procedure

It is always difficult to predict the exact outcome of the surgery but most patients get immediate, complete or permanent relief of their symptoms.

Risks of the procedure

The surgery is low risk and usually provides immediate relief, but a few minor complications can occasionally occur.

Bleeding from the wound - This can occur and is usually caused by standing and walking too much immediately after the operation. Sit or lie with your feet up for several hours after the operation to avoid this.

Infection of the toe - This does sometimes happen and is more likely if the toe was badly inflamed before the operation. If the toe becomes increasingly painful and swollen in the few days following the procedure, you will need to seek medical advice.

Discomforts of the procedure

There may be some pain after the operation, which can be relieved when taking pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. Wearing loose slippers or open toe shoes will also be more comfortable.

After the operation the toe will have a bandage on and this needs to be removed 48 hours after the operation. If the toenail has been removed completely the dressing will need to be re-applied by your practice nurse. If there are any stitches they will need to be removed after two weeks. Keeping the foot clean and using a simple dressing will help prevent socks from sticking to the wound.

Alternatives to the procedure

If the nail is not too deeply embedded you may be able to treat it at home by soaking the foot twice a day in warm salty water to reduce the swelling and tenderness. Use of antibiotic cream and bandage and wearing open toe shoes should also help.